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~~Lake Tahoe~~

Wendell W. Keck

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SCENIC ANALYSES OF THE LAKE TAHOE REGION
A Guide to Planning

Prepared for
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
and
Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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South Lake Tahoe, California
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Establishment of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was consented to by the Congress through enactment of Public Law 91-148. On March 19, 1970, the Governors of Nevada and California signed the proclamation that proclaimed creation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Since the authorized staff of the Agency was small, it enlisted help from several committees composed of technical specialists and other citizens concerned with resource conservation and orderly development of the Tahoe environmental resources.

The planning effort has been aided greatly by generous cooperation from numerous federal, state, county, and municipal agencies and from several colleges and interested private individuals. Cooperating agencies included:

Federal:

Department of Agriculture: Forest Service; Soil Conservation Service

Department of Commerce: Environmental Science Services Administration

Department of Defense: Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Interior: The Bureaus of Mines, Outdoor Recreation, Reclamation, Sport Fisheries and Wildlife; Federal Water Quality Administration; and the Geological Survey

Department of Transportation: Coast Guard; Federal Highway Administration; Federal Aviation Administration

State:

California: The Resources Agency of California

Nevada: The Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

County and Municipal:

Carson City, Douglas, and Washoe Counties, Nevada; El Dorado and Placer Counties, and City of South Lake Tahoe, California

Schools:

Foresta Institute; Sacramento State College; Tahoe College; University of California at Berkeley and Davis; University of Nevada; Desert Research Institute.

Any publication that compiles and presents information from so large and disparate a group of contributors as this one does is susceptible to error, inconsistency, and omission. Sustained effort has been made to avoid these flaws; but if it has failed occasionally, the reader's forbearance is humbly solicited.

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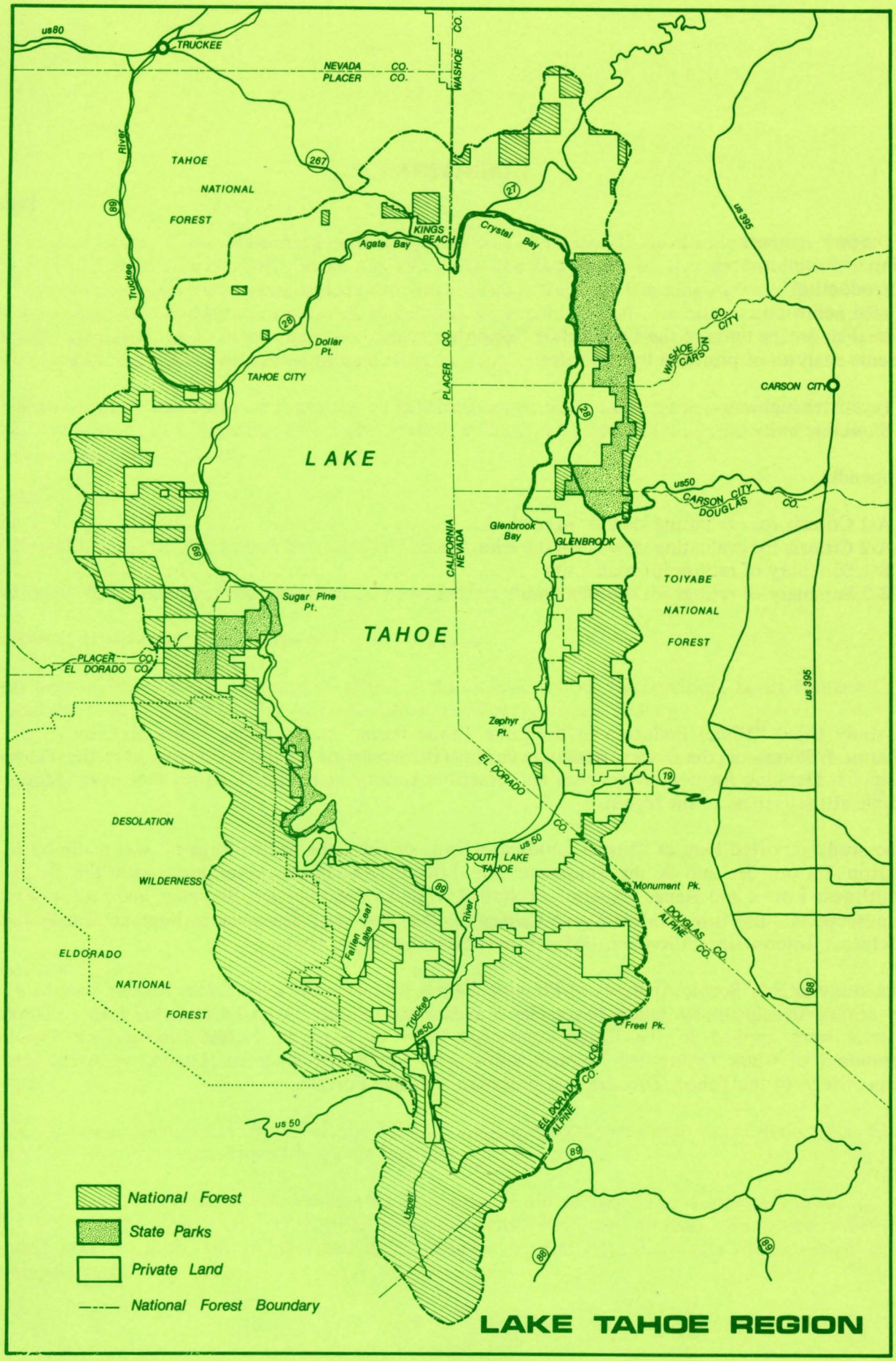
A study titled "Visual Pollution in the Lake Tahoe Basin," prepared by James McEvoy III and Sharon Williams of the Tahoe Research Group (University of California, Davis), for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, inventories and describes various man-made features that have reduced scenic attractiveness of the region.

The study reported here as "Visual Landscape Units of the Lake Tahoe Region" was made by R. Burton Litton, Jr. and Kenji Shiozawa. Mr. Litton is Landscape Architect with the Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, USDA Forest Service, Berkeley, and Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of California, Berkeley. Mr. Shiozawa is Regional Landscape Architect, Intermountain Region, USDA Forest Service, Ogden, Utah.

The study titled "Scenic Analyses of Principal Travel Routes in the Lake Tahoe Region" was based on criteria developed by James Hagemeier, Landscape Architect, Arapaho National Forest. These criteria were applied to the Visual Landscape Units by a special Forest Service Task Group composed of Clark Ostergaard, George Noble, and James Kirschenman, Landscape Architects, respectively, of the Tahoe, Toiyabe, and Eldorado National Forests.


us80
TRUCKEE
NEVADA CO.
PLACER CO.
WASHOE CO.
Truckee River
TAHOE
NATIONAL
FOREST
267
89
21
KINGS BEACH
Agate Bay
Crystal Bay
us 395
28
Dollar Pt.
TAHOE CITY
PLACER CO.
WASHOE CO.
CARSON CITY
CARSON CITY
LAKE
us50
CARSON CITY
DOUGLAS CO.
Glenbrook Bay
GLENBROOK
CALIFORNIA
NEVADA
TOIYABE
NATIONAL
FOREST
Sugar Pine Pt.
TAHOE
PLACER CO.
EL DORADO CO.
us 395
Zephyr Pt.
EL DORADO CO.
19
DESOLATION
WILDERNESS
us 50
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE
Monument Pk.
89
Fallen Leaf Lake
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DOUGLAS CO.
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ELDORADO
NATIONAL
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us 50
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88
EL DORADO CO.
ALPINE CO.
us 50
89
Upper
88
National Forest
State Parks
Private Land
National Forest Boundary
LAKE TAHOE REGION

INTRODUCTION

General Features of the Lake Tahoe Planning Area

Lake Tahoe and the mountainous, timber-covered basin immediately surrounding it provide one of the most beautiful environments in the Sierra Nevada and in the nation. The Lake itself, an irregular oval about 22 miles long by 12 miles wide, covers 191 square miles; it occupies a deep depression between crests of the Sierra Nevada and Carson ranges. Since its surface is 6,225 feet above mean sea level, Lake Tahoe is one of the largest high-altitude lakes in the world. The clarity and purity of its water are outstanding. In fact, protection of quality of the water in Lake Tahoe is a primary objective for effective control of the region's environment.

The spectacular scenery of the Lake Tahoe Region results from unique geological conditions that prevailed when the lake was formed. The basement rock is predominantly granite related to the rocks found throughout the Sierra Nevada. On the other hand, the geologic structure–the faulting that produced the lake basin itself--is related to the Basin Ranges that extend eastward from the Sierra to the Wasatch Range in Utah. The lake was formed by a natural dam–a great pile of andesitic mudflow breccia--across the north outlet.

Lake Tahoe is on the eastern boundary of that part of the Sierra Nevada that was extensively glaciated during the Pleistocene epoch. Huge valley glaciers moved down canyons along the western side of the lake, scouring away loose rock and building up great piles of morainal debris. Along the eastern side, glaciers developed only on the shaded side of the highest peaks; so most of this area was not glaciated. This accounts for the subdued rolling topography typical of the Carson Range, as contrasted to the rugged Sierran crest on the west side of the basin.

Climate of the region is strongly influenced by topography. Marine air from the Pacific Ocean, 150 miles to the west, drops its moisture (mostly as snow) as it rises over the crest of the Sierra. Average annual precipitation ranges from more than 50 inches on the western side of the region to about 25 inches along much of the eastern shoreline. The Weather Bureau at Tahoe City, on the west side, reports long-term average snowfall of 213 inches. The fairly long summers are comparatively cool; mean maximum temperature at Tahoe City in July over a 50-year period was 78° F. Winters are cold but seldom severe; mean daily minimum temperature for January over the same period was 17° F. The high elevation and cool temperatures result in a short growing season–an average of only 70 to 120 frost-free days per year at various points near the Lake.

Vegetation includes desert, montane, and alpine species typical of the eastern slopes of the Sierra. Pine and fir forests were heavily logged between 1860 and 1900 when demand for lumber and props for the Nevada silver mines was high. Even so, today the region has good stands of conifers between the Lake level and 9,000 feet, plus considerable areas covered by chaparral and other brush. On fairly level open areas that have a few inches of soil, grasses and other herbage flourish during the short growing season.

Numerous species of wildlife inhabit the Lake Tahoe region. Deer, bear, mountain lion, coyote, rabbit, raccoon, and several rodents are common. Land birds and waterfowl are present in small numbers consistent with available habitat. Heavy commercial fishing in the Lake around 1900 depleted native populations of cutthroat trout and whitefish, but kokanee salmon and several

species of fish stocked from state hatcheries provide good recreational fishing today. Numerous tributary streams also provide sport fishing.

Soils are generally shallow and highly erodible–easily disturbed and slow to stabilize–but the soil is fairly deep in some bottom lands and glacial debris areas. The varied climate and highly erodible soils combine to make the Lake Tahoe region a fragile environment. Hence the ecological balance is easily upset. Whenever vegetation is removed, it is not soon replaced. Erosion by wind and water is a constant hazard; it damages pristine features of the Lake, including the spawning areas of native fish.

Changing Environment

Before the white man invaded this area about the middle of the 1800's, the somewhat nomadic Washoe Indian tribe inhabited it. Their name for the Lake, "Tahoe," has been variously translated as "big water," "high water," or "water in a high place." The first recorded white visitors were John Fremont's exploring party (1844); they were soon followed by the Forty-niners and other western migrants and adventurers.

During most of the following 100 years, Lake Tahoe was the summer recreation area for wealthy Californians, mostly from San Francisco and the Sacramento Valley. The few summer resorts, scattered stores, service stations, and restaurants hardly marred the natural beauty of the region.

Soon after World War II all this began to change. With increased general affluence, steadily and rapidly increasing numbers of vacationers began to visit the area; their visits gradually extended the "season" from summer to the full year. Establishment of year-round casinos at Stateline in 1955 and the phenomenal growth of winter sports added to the influx of both visitors and residents. By unofficial count in 1965, the region had nearly 29,000 yearlong residents–more than double the 1960 federal census figure. Present projections anticipate more than 50,000 residents by 1980 and an added summer population topping 250,000.

These projected increases in resident and transient populations will inevitably multiply and intensify the environmental problems that already are plaguing the area; hence the crucial need for planning orderly development that can be sustained by the natural capacities of the region.

Administrative and Governmental Responsibility

The Planning Area established by the Bi-State Planning Compact between the States of California and Nevada is a basin covering 332,160 acres plus 3,340 acres near the Lake outlet in the Lower Truckee River drainage. This includes the 122,628 acres of lake surface. Governmental jurisdiction over land in the Lake Tahoe Planning Area is complex. The Area is divided between California (Placer, El Dorado, and Alpine Counties) and Nevada (Washoe and Douglas Counties and Carson City). This division of governmental responsibility makes it difficult to coordinate the administration of government in the Area in the interest of protecting the environment.

Nearly half (48.7 percent) of the land area is federally owned–chiefly in three National Forests totalling 103,872 acres. An additional 4.5 percent is state-owned, nearly all in State Parks. Thus about 53 percent of the land in the Planning Area is publicly owned.

Of nearly 75 miles of lake shoreline, about 18 percent is publicly owned. This is chiefly 8 miles belonging to the State of California and 5.5 miles in National Forests.

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency began work as soon as the Governors of California and Nevada signed the proclamation creating the Bi-State Planning Agency. Public Law 91-148 had enumerated the dangers of deterioration of the natural environment at Tahoe and of the increasing demands on various natural resources and features of the region; also, it emphatically stated the need to maintain equilibrium between the region's natural endowment and limitations on one hand and the environment that man is creating. It recognized need for establishing "an area-wide planning agency with powers to adopt and enforce a regional plan of resource conservation and orderly development, to exercise effective environmental controls, and to perform other essential functions...."

TRPA was ordered to develop and adopt, within 18 months of its formation (i.e., by September 1971), a plan for regional development that would include separate plans for land use, transportation, conservation, recreational development, and public services and facilities, to name a few. The Agency was further directed to consider and to seek to harmonize the needs of the whole region with the plans of local governmental units and the existing land use plans of state and federal agencies.

This publication incorporates the results of analytical studies of scenery in the Lake Tahoe region made by three study groups (p. iii). The two sections on Visual Landscape Units and Scenic Analyses are complementary and should be studied as a single unit. Information herein is intended chiefly to guide regional planning.

VISUAL POLLUTION

Lake Tahoe and the basin surrounding it, one of the most scenic areas in the nation, has been undergoing substantial physical alterations during the past three decades. The increased tourist and resident populations have produced spectacular increases in commercial and residential building throughout the region. This urbanization has also produced several environmental problems such as crowding of public and private facilities, traffic congestion, air and water pollution, and higher intensities of noise. Urbanization has also altered the visual aspect of the region. The greatly increased number of commercial and residential structures has measurably reduced local scenic attractiveness; also the erection of signs and utility lines and some alteration of the vegetative cover have changed the general and local appearance of the landscape.

A recent study of "visual pollution" in this area [1/] by the Tahoe Research Group at the University of California, Davis, developed many interesting data. During the summer of 1970 the Tahoe Research Group sectioned the interior (Lake side) half of the perimeter roadway (U. S. 50, California 89, and California and Nevada 28) into 1000-foot units and inventoried the viewing opportunities and obstructions in each of these sections. Highlights of this report are:

Visual Pollution

1. One of the most serious viewing problems is the presence of numerous buildings and commercial signs, whose appearance sharply contrasts with that of the natural surroundings by reason of their color, design, and materials.

2. Commercial signs seriously detract from the beauty of the Lake Tahoe environment because they usually are designed and placed so as to contrast as sharply as possible with their surroundings. The presence of high buildings plus the proliferation of signs produces a visual nightmare for many persons.

3. Utility lines are both numerous and conspicuous in the Tahoe region and often obstruct or impair what would be pleasing views in otherwise undeveloped areas. Utility lines are visible along 54 percent of the interior perimeter roadway.

4. Removal of vegetation and disturbance of soil have created serious problems in this region. They aggravate production of sediment, and this in turn degrades quality and clarity of water in the Lake. The vegetative cover over 37 percent of the land between the perimeter roadway and the lakeshore has been removed or seriously altered.

5. Present urbanization of the area has eliminated about one-fourth of the total view of the Lake that a visitor might have had from the perimeter highways. As these highways are located, less than one-half their length offers any view of the Lake. As urbanization continues, obstructions of view will certainly increase.

1/ McEvoy, James, III and Sharon Williams. 1971. Visual pollution of the Lake Tahoe Basin, a report to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

A primary objective stated in Public Law 91-148, which created the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, is the preservation of natural beauty of the Lake and its surroundings. Accomplishing this objective will require decisions on control of development that are likely to be unpopular. Necessarily they will restrict the number, size, location, and design of buildings and commercial signs. Such controls will be essential to maintenance and preservation of the scenic features of the Lake Tahoe region.

VISUAL LANDSCAPE UNITS OF THE LAKE TAHOE REGION [2/]

Lake Tahoe and its enclosing basin constitute a single physiographic unit–a series of visual subdivisions that are seen in driving around the Lake on Highways 50, 28, and 89. Eleven areas or landscape units have been identified by field reconnaissance made primarily from these encircling highways. Several subordinate units are either attached to or are surrounded by the larger landscape units. Definition of the units depends primarily on spatial characteristics:

1. Enclosures are identified by wall-like facades that drop from a rear surrounding ridge; a cohesive skyline is part of the unit.

2. Headland spurs or shoreline spurs are present.

3. Semblance of a floor or flattened lower and central slopes are present.

4. There are cove indentations along the waterline or some other means of identifying a limited segment of the water edge.

5. Presence of conspicuous or dominant landforms such as peaks, scarps, or lakes.

6. Presence of visually distinct forest stands or other plant associations.

One goal of this analysis of scenery in the Lake Tahoe region is to clarify establishment of compatible relations between the natural landscape and development or change. It is prompted by realization that Lake Tahoe is a priceless scenic environment and that it can be maintained only by preservation of the scenic features that make it beautiful. The most general spatial characteristic of these landscape units is their bowl shape and inward focus toward the water surface. They are highly varied in scale, configuration, and individual appearance. Internal content of these units and subunits is described below in general terms. Such local features as rock bluffs, ponds or streams, distinctive edges or water lines, and conspicuous plant communities, along with minor enclosures (e.g., meadow spaces) have been included. These local elements are significant because they (1) help to define the character or boundaries of units and subunits, and (2) suggest developmental constraints that may respond to visual clues found in the landscape.

Although boundaries of these landscape units may be redefined later, the units now appear as reasonably finite entities. Their structural unity and visual continuity make them logical areas within which particular management goals may be related to specific visual environments. As areal management is considered for each unit, its essential elements and their composition will need to be precisely identified. The following discussion includes comments about the nature of existing developments, the kinds of visual impressions observed, imminent potential impacts, or directions for development that seem to be desirable.

The landscape units delineated on the map for this report should be compared with features shown on other resource maps of this region to see to what degree other kinds of data show similarity or disparity. The following pages delineate and describe the 11 major landscape units and several subunits.

2/ This study is reported by R. Burton Litton, Jr.

South Side Landscape Units
Landscape Unit No. 1: Upper Truckee Slot.

This long narrow enclosure, set back from the Lake, is hemmed in by the Echo and Carson Range ridges. Terminal features and the boundary at the south end are Red Lake and Stevens Peaks and ridges with generally snow-covered shoulders. The Echo Summit (west) wide of the Unit is steep; considerable rock is exposed, and sparse, patchy timber is visible--quite a different aspect from the uniformly timbered slopes on the east. The river bottom, with its open flats and willow-aspen clumps, is distinctive as seen in conjunction with its contrasting side slopes.

Scattered buildings and roads on this river bottom will produce visual impacts to the degree that more are built on the open floor. If further buildings and roadways in this unit were kept within the lodgepole pine stands behind the flat, the river bottom would be left as open space–an area best reserved for flood plain protection.

A subordinate Unit, 1A, the **Luther Pass Corridor**, is the Highway 89 approach to the Upper Truckee Slot. This entry space is perpendicular to the Slot, relatively broad at the Grass Lake (west) end, and becomes more narrow as it drops down the creek defile. The lower boundary between Units 1 and 1A is the Grass Lake Meadow enclosure, which has an attractive aspen rim and rocky outcrop at the upper north edge.

Grass Lake–more wet sedge meadow than water surface--is the floor of a well delineated enclosure landscape. The lower edges of its wall show a mixture of aspen, lodgepole, and Jeffrey pine interspersed with piles of granite boulders. East end outviews terminate in the mountain ridges around Pickett Peak. At the west end, State Highway 89 conforms harmoniously to the creek defile.

Both this subordinate unit and the **Incline Lake and Meadow Corridor** (Unit No. 7A) function in much the same way. These, plus the Truckee River Corridor (Subunit No. 9B), the Glenbrook Creek Corridor (part of Unit No. 5), and the Echo Summit road should be recognized for the tone they set for both the tourist and resident who appraoch Lake Tahoe. Until now there has been relatively little detractive development on any of these five approaches, and their inherent scenic values should be recognized and preserved.

Landscape Unit No. 2: South Peaks Basin. (Monument--Freel--Thompson).

The South Peaks and the ridge that connects them are the highest major mountain grouping near the Lake. Their height and continuity are emphasized by the **Lake Valley-Heavenly Valley Flat and Shoulder** (Subunit 2A). This Unit stops short of the Lake's edge because its lower slopes are covered by timber and a strip of land along the south shore (Unit No. 3) has become completely urbanized.

The most conspicuous sights on the upper slopes are the ski runs and lift clearings on Monument Peak, readily visible from the farthest reaches of the basin–such as Stateline Point 22 miles to the north. This suggests the need for anticipating similar sights that could result from establishing other ski runs in the basin. Projecting the appearance of such clearings in the landscape as they would be seen from pertinent viewpoints should result in control of their location and design so that their impact would not be an unhappy surprise discovered only after job completion. Anticipating the appearance of such clearings and other large-scale manipulations of the terrain should be a routine procedure so that these clearings may be controlled instead of resulting from chance.

Landscape Subunit No. 2A: Lake Valley-Heavenly Valley Flat and Shoulder.

The Upper Truckee River and Trout Creek wetland flats distinguish this area. Erection of buildings should be restricted to the conifer-covered morainal ridges and rolls around the flat: loss of the wet bottoms to real estate development would be loss of a significant local characteristic. The Twin Peaks, low granite domes on the Upper Truckee River and west of the airport, are noteworthy

features in this Subunit acting as anchor points of the boundary. This area should be carefully maintained in its present condition, but developmental trends here suggest that they could easily be ignored.

Landscape Unit No. 3: South Shore Strip.

This alluvial flat, strongly oriented northward toward the Lake, is the site of the South Shore urbanization that has spread from Highways 50 and 89. The strip is divided into east and west halves; the central division is the outthrust point of the Upper Truckee Marsh. The western end of this strip is at Cascade Lake moraine, while the eastern side ends at Zephyr Point and Round Mound. The west side includes Pope Beach and Baldwin Beach and conveys the impression of nearly continuous but varied vegetation types with development subordinate to the forest cover.

The highway aspect, especially on the east side, is one of building mish-mash. The lakefront seemingly has little consequence because it is almost completely screened by buildings. As one approaches this area from the south, the first and only close-up view of the water surface in Unit No. 3 is at the El Dorado County Park at Bijou.

Round Mound, the small granitic dome feature that terminates the Unit, stands out in contrast to the flat wet meadows adjacent to it. The eastern half of Unit No. 3 also has the same kind of contrast: the open flat lands (the 4-H campsite and golf course) seen in conjunction with the high-rise buildings in Stateline. Uphill and northward from this concentration of high-rise structures is a conspicuously shoddy and unfinished complex of mobile homes and rough grading.

Urbanization of the South Shore Strip seems to have only casual or incidental concern with the presence of the Lake. A basic design thrust to establish some link between structures and Lake could be established on two principles:

1. Discourage the continuous wall effect that is now apparent from the highway, and
2. Encourage penetrating access and views to the Lake by breaking the structural concentration into segments.

A subordinate Unit, No. 3A, the **Round Mound-Edgewood Alcove**, is an eastward extension of the eastern half of Unit No. 3; it pushes inland behind Tahoe Village in the flattened defile toward Daggett Pass. It appears as a low, depressed skyline of trees rather than a landform edge. Its eastern side in common with Unit No. 4 is a simple ridge topped by occasional granite knobs, including Castle Peak. Its west side is the heavily-timbered shoulder of the Monument Peak-Freel Peak group.

East Side Landscape Units
Landscape Unit No. 4: Zephyr Cove-Cave Rock

Defined at the water's edge by Zephyr Point and Cave Rock Point, this half-circle bowl is terminated inland by a low-ringing crest line. The central portion of this bowl is a moderately sloping plane that breaks gradually from the steeper slopes behind it. The back ridge is defined consistently by an irregular knobby skyline. Surfaces are generously covered with second-growth timber; patches of granite outcrop are part of the pattern. Grass wetlands, containing streams with willow–aspen margins, constitute central spaces in this unit. These wetlands would serve best by being retained; structures should be kept back of grass-timber edges.

The numerous residential buildings are so well scattered within the pine-fir forest that the impression of such use is diluted. This unit is flatter than Glenbrook Bay and most dwellings are single-family units. Housing appears to be of substantial quality but not essentially different from suburban tracts near any city or town in California or Nevada. Such development of "suburban anyplace" effects a dilution of the special environmental qualitites that distinguish Tahoe. Attention to principles of planning and design that can emphasize Lake Tahoe attributes should be required.

Landscape Unit No. 5: Glenbrook Bay.

This unit is another half-circle bay somewhat similar to Unit No. 4. It runs at the waterline between Cave Rock and Deadman Point (north of Glenbrook proper) and is also defined by the surrounding rear crest of rather low mountains. The essential difference between the north and south parts is that the north part is dominated by the Glenbrook indentation while the south part is more linear and has a rather simple sloping land plane.

Highway 50 cuts east and north to Spooner Summit at Glenbrook; thus the traveler loses sight of the Lake edge as he drives toward Carson City. But the Spooner Summit road, which is within the enclosure of Glenbrook Creek, constitutes another corridor entry to the Lake. Outviews to and across the Lake are a part of this, and the downhill termination is in the rocky bluff feature called Shakespeare Point. Shakespeare Point is significant as seen in this corridor, but is insignificant as it merges with the forest when viewed from the south. As an entry to the Tahoe Basin area, this Glenbrook Creek corridor merits particular attention.

Cave Rock, a sugarloaf formation, is an anchor feature common to both Units 4 and 5. Zigzag roads in sparse timber cover above Cave Rock are visible from the west side of the Lake, 10 to 12 miles distant.

The uphill margins of Glenbrook Bay are steep and appear to complicate development. Buildings are most apparent as they occupy the strip between Highway U. S. 50 and water edge.

Landscape Unit No. 6: Marlette Shoulder Strip.

This relatively long strip consists of a rather steep and irregular shoulder that tips toward the Lake from the ridge line. The pine-fir forest does considerable screening of view of the Lake, and the road often turns behind small ridges. The Lake is visible infrequently in the southerly part of this Unit, but can be seen more frequently as the route moves northward. This strip ends at the point north of Marlette Peak and Sand Point.

North of Glenbrook numerous scattered rock piles and granite pinnacle forms begin to show in the forest. Where the granitic outcrop pattern is visible in the Marlette back lands, it usually is accompanied by open stocking of trees with low chaparral–suggesting minimal potential screening of buildings or roads. Indeed, buildings here are so well hidden that there is no suggestion of occupation in the Strip except about Sand Point State Park and Subunit 6A.

Midway through the Strip is a small pond on Bliss Creek, with accompanying aspen groves. The grassy, wet meadow along the creek below Spooner Lake is an attractive point at the southern boundary of this Unit. Both of these wetland areas are important for the environmental enrichment they offer, and they would be damaged–probably destroyed–by any material change.

Two subunits are recognized: No. 6A, **Skunk Harbor-Prey Bottom** and No. 6B, **Sand Harbor Granite Boulder Strip.**

Subunit No. 6A, **Skunk Harbor-Prey Bottom** is a small enclosure that includes Skunk Harbor and Lower Prey Meadows. It is the first lake contact after Highway 28 moves downhill from its inland intersection with Highway U. S. 50. Within Skunk Harbor-Prey bottom is the main concentration of buildings and private use in the whole Boulder Strip.

Subunit No. 6B, **Sand Harbor Granite Boulder Strip,** starts at the projecting point adjacent to Tunnel Creek (and below Ponderosa Ranch) and runs for several miles north to Sand Harbor. This area has many heavy granite boulders and jointed granite extrusions along the shoreline--an exceedingly handsome water edge shown off by close proximity of the highway. Vegetation is open

brush and widely spaced trees; many surfaces show considerable granite exposure. Although the granite boulder edge runs throughout the eastern waterline down to Zephyr Point, intimate contact with it is lost a mile below Sand Point.

Area No. 6B, to the north, should be considered as highly sensitive to changes due to construction of roads and power lines. Present development excludes buildings, and ownership is presumed to be public.

North Side Landscape Units
Landscape Unit No. 7: Mt. Rose--Crystal Bay Amphitheater

This sharply-defined Unit is anchored on the south by the Marlette headland above Sand Point. The uphill crest is significant because it is capped and identified by the Mt. Rose--Rose Knob Peak group, the dominant peaks of north Tahoe. This crest ends on the west with the spur ridge dropping down to Stateline Point. The strongly indented shoreline of the Bay is roughly rectangular in plan but appears to be more nearly semicircular. The amphitheater effect is reinforced by the relatively simple, flattened slope that rises from the shore to the steeper breaks below the upper peaks. Through the lower slope and into the central rises are the sites of Incline Village, Ponderosa Ranch, Sierra Nevada College, and various shoreline subdivisions. Mildly stated, urbanization is moving fast.

The vegetative cover in this Unit may be divided into 3 classes:

1. **Stringers and patches** starting on the steepest faces below the top barrens of the Mt. Rose group.

2. More sparse cover on the central and intermediately steep slopes.

3. **Dense and generally complete timber** on the gentler surfaces that begin at or near the waterline; this covers a dominant portion of the whole amphitheater face. Patches of brush and rocky sites, both with sparsely spaced trees, are seen above Incline Village and Ponderosa Ranch. Such spots are especially open segments of otherwise heavy timber cover; they are especially vulnerable to visual impacts from developmental change. Scalped, quarried, and unstabilized surfaces, including parking space near Ponderosa Ranch and Incline Village Corporation Yard are degrading elements in this eastern part of Unit No. 7.

The continuous strip of multiple-story structures at the western water line of Crystal Bay is one of the most conspicuous barriers to shoreline views to be encountered anywhere on the Lake.

The subordinate Unit No. 7A, **Incline Lake and Meadow Corridor** northeast of Unit No. 7 is at the crest line and is visible only after passing the crest. It is Highway 27's entry to the amphitheater. Since this Unit is high (8000 ' and higher) and predominantly open or into the patchy tree zone, it is especially prone to show any kind of impacts from construction or facilities. If power lines, roads, and buildings are to be permitted here, they could readily dominate the whole corridor scene. Very sensitive treatment is recommended; recognition of entry functions to the region should be maintained.

Landscape Unit No. 8: Agate-Carnelian Bay Space.

Defined at the waterline by the half-circle between Stateline Point and Dollar Point, this space is terminated at the back by the smoothly undulating ridge between Martis Peak and Mt. Pluto. Spur ridges above and adjoining these two points complete the enclosure. Flick Point separates Agate Bay from Carnelian Bay, but the separation is subordinate to the clear continuity of the upper ridge and terrain face. The topographic facade is a series of smoothly rounded hill forms and concurrent creek valley.

Trees and a strip of urban development screen the Lake from the highway. A row of buildings along the lake side of the highway obstructs views through a considerable portion of this Unit. At one spot east of Dollar Point, there are long clear views southeast to the South Peaks--28 miles distant. The central east range from Marlette Peak south is also visible, especially in the later afternoon.

Several small but distinctive talus openings (minor landmarks) lie north of Carnelian Bay. A minor power line crosses an old burn and brushfield north of Tahoe Vista on Brockway Summit Road. It is extremely conspicuous because of the right-of-way clearing and the fact that it is on a southwest exposure. This suggests the conspicuous and unsightly visual impacts to be expected from any construction in such areas.

Utility poles and overhead wires on the lake side of the road impair views in the Brockway section. However, much of this Unit is thickly stocked by mixed old and cutover timber that effectively hides the typical one- and two-story buildings there. The only conspicuous high-rise buildings in this Unit are on Stateline Point.

West Side Landscape Units
Landscape Unit No. 9: West Side Forest Strip.

Between Dollar Point and Sugar Pine Point, there is a general continuity of old growth pine-fir forest that dominates the roadway route. The lake edge is virtually lost except for outviews over the water at Tahoe City, Sour, and McKinney Bay. One is hardly aware of the west side ridge, which is rather uniform in height and is covered by trees. Scenic characteristics of Unit 9 are somewhat confusing. They consist of (1) a lower and gently sloped strip terminated by the lake edge, quite heavily and continuously wooded with a conifer mix of both old and second-growth timber, (2) central knobs and ridges, generally timbered with a few small brush patches, and (3) an obscure back ridge area virtually hidden by trees and intermediate ridges.

There is a case for recognizing a Tahoe City subunit since a natural boundary line is formed by the Truckee River and watershed divide. However, despite this natural stream divide, the baffle arrangement of the outfall defile tends to mask the break. The visual transition with the lower portion of the strip is gradual. The exposed urbanization, rather than anything else, must be the basis for cutting off a subordinate area. From Tahoe City and the backlands above it there are outviews to the east and the extreme south end of the Lake. Behind Tahoe City and on the nose of Dollar Point are chaparral areas with scattered individual trees. On Dollar Point, buildings and utility lines within open areas are conspicuous and degrade outviews to the Lake.

The condominiums being built near the water edge (e.g., those near Tahoma) are smaller, but they produce the same wall-like barrier between the road and the outviews as those observed on west Crystal Bay (Unit No. 7).

An unnamed basaltic column or post-pile is visible at the skyline north of Ward Creek--an unusual element within the basin and related to the basaltic escarpments typical of the Truckee River corridor below Tahoe City.

Two formal Subunits, No. 9A, **the McKinney Bay Cove**, and No. 9B, the **Truckee River Corridor**, must be noted.

Subunit No. 9A runs between Sour and Chambers Lodge at the Lake margin. It is anchored at the north by Eagle Rock and its surrounding back ridge with strongly patterned surface. Its terminating west ridge can be seen as part of this cove. Its strength lies in the simple curved line of the beach edge.

Although outside of the Tahoe Basin proper, Subunit No. 9B, the Truckee River Corridor, is

important as a major entrance to the Lake. The 5- to 6-mile stretch below Tahoe City has experienced relatively little development except at the entrances to the Alpine and Squaw Valley ski areas. There is marked contrast between the more heavily wooded east slope and the more open west face with basaltic scarps and talus patches. The river is displayed to good advantage and is not now forced to compete with many adverse impacts such as the existing tank gas storage area. The scenic value of this corridor is high, but it stops abruptly at the borrow pit operation at the west portal to Tahoe City. The unfortunate mish-mash at this portal point effectively dissipates the idea that the Lake as a destination has been reached. Maintenance of the corridor's quality and rehabilitation of environs of the town-lake entry would be desirable contributions to the Lake Tahoe area.

Landscape Unit No. 10: The Rubicon-Angora Crest and Shoulder.

This long unit running between Sugar Pine Point and Fallen Leaf Lake is complicated by the necessary inclusion of two Subunits as well as the **Emerald Bay-Cascade Lake Feature Enclosure** which is **Landscape Unit No. 11.**

Identity of Unit No. 10 depends primarily on the strength of the crest line, which includes Rubicon Peak and Ridge, Mt. Tallac, and Angora Peak. Although they are not strictly attached, these peaks suggest connection. This is the third area dominated by peak groupings; the other two are Units No. 2 and No. 7.

The road moves along the mountain shoulders, slightly back from the shoreline, and provides occasional outviews either over the Lake or toward the crest. A forest landscape enclosure moves along with the road, but it is highly varied in its tightness, looseness, or change of scale and detail interest.

Fallen Leaf Lake, seemingly of considerable visual interest when noted on a map, is virtually overtopped by pine forest canopy or has such effective side screening that its presence is easily overlooked.

Subunit No. 10A, **Meeks Bay Cove,** is the northerly introduction to Unit No. 10. Meeks Bay is a small sharply defined enclosure between Sugar Pine Point and the north face below Rubicon Peak. There is an abrupt break with the west side forest strip, partly because of the appearance of Rubicon Peak and partly because of the open brush fields that start here and contrast with the previous forest stands. The brush fields show many signs of subdivision road work and construction of housing.

On Highway 89 north of Bliss State Park entry, the zigzag subdivision roads on the chaparral covered moraine below Meeks Bay are very conspicuous. This kind of open chaparral country--prevalent in Subunits No. 10A and No. 10B--is most vulnerable to conspicuous disturbance, especially to road building. Exposed south faces increase the strength of these visual images, and results of development are readily seen from the South Shore Strip, 8- to 10-miles distant.

The **Rubicon Bay Space,** Subunit No. 10B, is the small area between Rubicon Bay and the mountain ridge west of it. A section taken between water line and ridge will reveal a smooth curve with gradual slope transition between the steeper ridge and the alluvial flat. Brush fields allow both short internal views and long views to the east side of the Lake. Again, subdivisions are an impact within the brush fields.

In Subunits No. 10A and No. 10B, grass has been planted for road fill stabilization. This contrasts sharply with surrounding chaparral. This undesirable visual contrast might be eliminated by converting grass to manzanita-wild lilac species typical in the brush fields. Lines of utility poles in

these open areas, especially where they are between the road and the Lake, materially degrade view of the Lake. The extremely heavy telephone cables, 2" to 3" diameters, are especially detrimental.

Landscape Unit No. 11: Emerald Bay-Cascade Lake Feature Enclosure.

This relatively small unit, comparable in size to most of the Subunits, is outstanding in vivid presentation of two water features, island, and supporting peak features (Tallac, Maggies, Rubicon). Enclosure of the two water shapes adds to their compositional unity. A richness of variations spreads over the surfaces of the spatial envelope. For the automobile observer, this is the most conspicuous concentrated contact with the peaks, cirques, and moraines of any place on the Lake. Without doubt, this small area has the most varied and vivid landscape composition encountered in the Tahoe Region; it is the symbol of scenic quality at Lake Tahoe.

The major threat to this unit is the possibility of construction of a large-scale all-year highway. Since the unit is so small and so exceedingly rich scenically, any large-scale change would inevitably be destructive. As an over-simplified comment regarding some relief from the destructive impact of such a road, if it were to be approved, two points are made:

1. Size must be held to absolute minimum; it should be designed for lower speed than usual standards along other parts of the road.

2. Unconventional construction may be more compatible for such a natural (or non-urban/suburban) area. Such devices as bridging, tunnels, deck structures, and bridges would be essential. This small unit has no room for either the accommodation or heavy impact of conventional cut-fill construction.

VISUAL LANDSCAPE UNITS

1. UPPER TRUCKEE SLOT
   - 1a. Luther Pass Corridor

2. SOUTH PEAKS BASIN (Monument-Freel-Thompson)
   - 2a. Lake Valley-Heavenly Valley Flat and Shoulder

3. SOUTH SHORE STRIP
   - 3a. Round Mound-Edgewood Alcove

4. ZEPHYR COVE-CAVE ROCK

5. GLENBROOK BAY

6. MARLETTE SHOULDER STRIP
   - 6a. Skunk Harbor-Prey Bottom
   - 6b. Sand Harbor Granite Boulder Strip

7. MT. ROSE-CRYSTAL BAY AMPHITHEATER
   - 7a. Incline Lake-Meadow Corridor

8. AGATE-CARNELIAN BAY SPACE

9. WEST SIDE FOREST STRIP
   - 9a. McKinney Bay Cove
   - 9b. Truckee River Corridor

10. RUBICON-ANGORA CREST and SHOULDER
    - 10a. Meeks Bay Cove
    - 10b. Rubicon Bay Space

11. EMERALD BAY-CASCADE LAKE FEATURE ENCLOSURE

SCENIC ANALYSES OF PRINCIPAL TRAVEL ROUTES [3/]

PERIMETER HIGHWAYS

This study was designed to analyze and evaluate present comparative scenic values of the major roads in the Lake Tahoe Region and of views seen from the Lake itself so as to establish a baseline of scenic quality. Criteria for evaluating scenery (see Appendix A-1 and A-2) as viewed from perimeter highways and the Lake were concerned with:

1. Manmade features along roadway and shoreline.

2. Physical distractions to driving along roadways.

3. Roadway characteristics.

4. Views of the Lake from roadways.

5. General landscape views from roadways and shoreline.

6. Variety of scenery from roadways and shoreline.

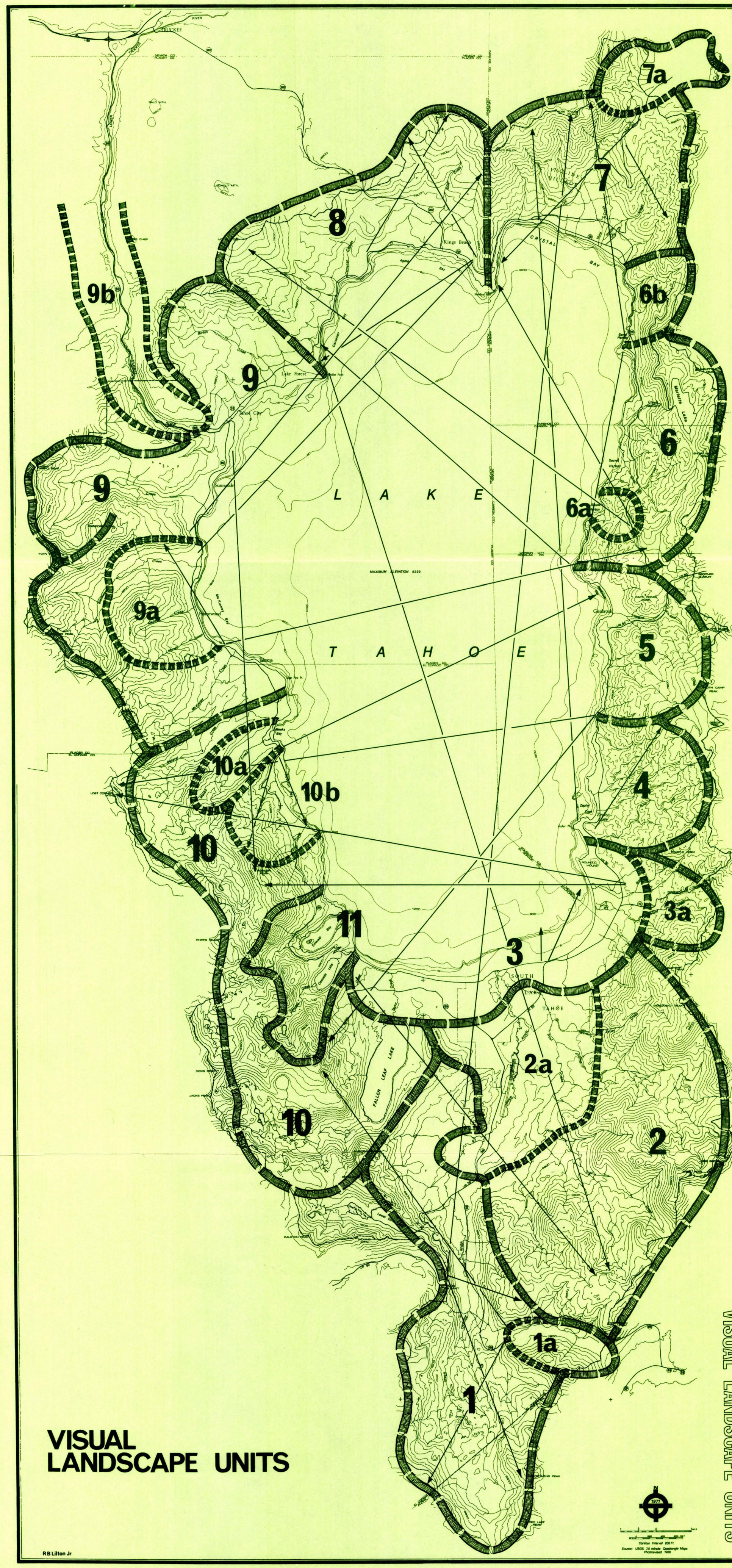
Evaluation technique

To evaluate scenery visible from highways and the Lake, the Forest Service Task Group made observations in sunny weather during periods of tourist activity. On roadways, any continuous section of road having the same general landscape characteristics was designated as a unit. Each road unit was rated after the Group had traveled over it in both directions at sightseeing speeds, and the average of the two ratings became the rating assigned to it (Appendix B-1). Only primary travel routes within the region were analyzed and evaluated.

Six criteria were used in evaluating scenery from roadways. Within each criterion three numerical grades (1, 3, and 5 for low, medium and high rating) were arbitrarily assigned. By this system of scoring, any unit of road might have a score ranging from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 30. Ratings of 43 road units within the Tahoe Region Planning Area are summarized in Appendix B. Their scores range from a low of 9 to a high of 27.

To evaluate scenery from the lakeshore, the same group of analysts traveled at slow speed around the Lake at a distance from shore similar to that traveled by sightseeing boats. A continuous section of lakeshore with similar landscape characteristics was designated as a unit. The scoring process for lakeshore views was essentially the same as that used for the roadways except that only three criteria were applied and only 33 shoreline units were evaluated (see Appendix B-2). Shoreline units could have scores from a low of 3 to a high of 15; range of actual scores was from 5 to 14.

[3/] **This study was made and reported by a Forest Service Task group consisting of Clark Ostergaard, George Noble, and James Kirschenman, landscape architects (p.iii).**



VISUAL LANDSCAPE UNITS

VISUAL LANDSCAPE UNITS

RB Lilton Jr

LAKE TAHOE REGION

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

USDA FOREST SERVICE

DESCRIPTIONS AND RATINGS OF TRAVEL UNITS
HIGHWAYS 50, 89 and 28

Following are brief descriptions and ratings of roadway units around the Lake starting at the intersection of Highway U. S. 50 and California 89 and going clockwise.

UNIT 1 TAHOE VALLEY: This commercial area has numerous motels, restaurants, two shopping centers, two branch banks, and numerous other small business buildings. Tree cover around the cleared areas is very heavy; negative visual impacts are mainly signs and buildings whose colors contrast sharply with one another and with the surrounding trees. The four-lane highway is fairly straight and cuts are not obtrusive. View from the road looking north is attractive.

Rating: 14

UNIT 2 CAMP RICHARDSON: The two-lane highway is narrow; timber grows next to the edge of the road, which has a few straight tangents. There are occasional glimpses of the outside scenery from a few points along the road, particularly as one travels north past Camp Richardson where the timber cover opens into sage. Manmade features are chiefly barriers, signs, and utility poles. Confusion and interference by pedestrians and vehicular traffic would be distracting in this unit during times of heavy use.

Rating: 20

UNIT 3 EMERALD BAY AREA: Exceptionally good views of the Lake can be seen from much of the road. There are some cut banks. At the beginning of the hill climb, the main vegetation is chinquapin, manzanita, and fir. Many road-cut banks are ravelling, and some roots of trees and shrubs are exposed. A traveler's attention is not drawn to the cut banks but to the striking views of the peaks that surround Emerald Bay. Cars parked on the road shoulder to enable passengers to get out and get a better view of the Bay and its surroundings cause some interference with traffic. The frequently curving alignment of the road adds to the visual experience by presenting varied outstanding views of the Lake and surrounding mountains. Close views of Emerald Bay and the mountain range jutting up immediately beyond, plus the varied vegetation and striking rock outcrops combine to make this road unit outstanding. The parking area at Emerald Bay State Park produces some visual distraction to a driver, but manmade features do not detract from the natural scene. The single resort at Bay View acts as a focal point at the end of a tangent. The road at the north end of this unit has attractive rocky-cut banks.

Rating: 27

UNIT 4 BLISS STATE PARK: The roadway in this Unit has some very interesting rock-cut banks. Views of the Lake and out of the corridor are limited. There are no manmade distractions from the scenery. Variety is lacking because plant cover is uniform.

Rating: 22

UNIT 5 RUBICON POINT: This unit has many structural distractions. The residential subdivision detracts from the landscape. The road has ravelled banks, but its curving alignment is attractive. The subdivisions and uniform vegetation make the immediate view rather monotonous. View across the Lake is good except for intrusion of utility poles and cables.

Rating: 23

UNIT 6 LONELY GULCH: Manmade scars are visible on the hills west of the road. There are no great physical distractions, but some driveways force householders to back vehicles onto the highway. Clear views of the Lake are obstructed by the utility poles and lines.

Rating: 17

UNIT 7 MEEKS BAY: Shabby cottages with garish colors stand close to the road. A campground is in the travel influence zone; trailers and tents detract from the natural scene. Physical distractions are numerous, and various manmade distractions degrade the appearance of this unit.

Rating: 12

UNIT 8 SUGAR PINE POINT: The drive through this Unit is attractive and is enhanced by interesting road alignment. There are few opportunities to view the Lake.

Rating: 23

UNIT 9 TAHOMA: Signs and structures are generally unattractively designed and some buildings are not adequately maintained. Glimpses of the Lake are impeded by trees, and there are few views of landscape expanses.

Rating: 15

UNIT 10 QUAIL CREEK: The Lake is very close to the road. Boathouses are visible, but not particularly distracting. Manmade features are generally compatible with the landscape in this area.

Rating: 18

UNIT 11 HOMEWOOD: There is much confusion in this Unit. Manmade features detract from favorable impression: shiny tin roofs, unharmonious colors, location and design of dwellings, and other structures.

Rating: 14

UNIT 12 TAHOE PINES: Distraction is high in this residential area because of the number of homes and because driveways and garages are next to the road. Highway 89 comes close to the Lake and provides some fine views of the east side of the Lake. Several piers interfere with attractiveness of these views.

Rating: 19

UNIT 13 SUNNYSIDE: Commercial. Sunnyside looks a little more attractive than some other commercial areas; it has fewer signs and their colors are more nearly compatible.

Rating: 14

UNIT 14 TAHOE TAVERN: Wooded, residential area. Lack of understory in this unit is noticeable. This unit has a few pleasing manmade structures.

Rating: 17

UNIT 15 TAHOE CITY: The bridge attracts pedestrians, but it creates some interference with traffic. The commercial area has many distractions: numerous signs, utility poles, and buildings. One gets an occasional view of the Lake between the buildings.

Rating: 12

UNIT 16 LAKE FOREST: Lake Forest is a wooded residential area that gives fleeting views of the Lake. The roadside has some interesting rocky-cut banks, but some areas are rather unkempt. The power lines obstruct the views of the Lake.

Rating: 18

UNIT 17 CEDAR FLAT: This unit is close to the Lake and above a wooded residential area. Driveways adjacent to the highway cause much physical interference. Houses and other structures have reasonable compatibility with the surroundings. These features are less noticeable because they are below the highway. Cut banks along the road are generally interesting because of much exposed rock.

Rating: 18

UNIT 18 CARNELIAN BAY: This Unit has many manmade features including a marina, trash piled beside the road, boats, boat trailers, a peewee golf course containing a variety of incongruous forms (a concrete Buddha, fish, mushroom, octopus and many others) in garish colors. Views of the Lake are possible from the highway in this Unit, but are degraded by the distracting foreground.

Rating: 16

UNIT 19 FLICK POINT: This unit has many piers, driveways, utility lines, and residences along the highway.

Rating: 14

UNIT 20 TAHOE VISTA: A commercial strip runs from Tahoe Vista to Kings Beach and around to Brockway. Spaces between buildings and trees give disappointingly quick views of the Lake and the mountains beyond. Tahoe Vista has much the same kind of commercial architecture, signs, and utility lines as many of the other commercial areas around the Lake.

Rating: 14

UNIT 21 STATELINE POINT: Commercial. Numerous buildings and signs detract from the natural landscape scene. The large casinos are reasonably attractive.

Rating: 21

UNIT 22 CRYSTAL BAY: Most homes in this residential area are designed to fit harmoniously into the environment. Cars backing from driveways onto the highway are potential hazard for the highway driver. The Lake is visible from the road.

Rating: 21

UNIT 23 MT. ROSE HIGHWAY: Excellent views of the Lake and mountains can be seen from the highway.

Rating: 27

UNIT 24 TAHOE MEADOW: Openness of this area gives the traveler a chance to view large landscape expanses. The meadow adds variety to the landscape.

Rating: 26

UNIT 25 PONDEROSA AREA: Heavy commercial development (gravel pits, equipment sheds, and warehouses) detracts from general appearance. Large open scars on the hillside detract greatly from the natural landscape.

Rating: 12

UNIT 26 SAND HARBOR: A very pleasant area with excellent Lake views. Beaches and rocks along the shore add much to the landscape. Parking along the road and pedestrians crossing the road create some problems.

Rating: 27

UNIT 27 PREY MEADOWS: An outstanding scenic area. The nearby hills and the mountains on the west side of the Lake are visible. The enclosed sections of meadow are pleasant. There are no buildings and little pedestrian traffic. Views of the Lake are spectacular.

Rating: 27

UNIT 28 SPOONER SUMMIT: Limited views of the Lake are visible from the summit. Spooner Lake adds variety to the landscape.

Rating: 15

UNIT 29 CAVE ROCK: The view through the tunnel is unusual but attractive because of the framing. The Lake view and mountain views add to the visual experience. The upper end of this section has heavy roadside cuts that detract from the landscape scene.

Rating: 24

UNIT 30 ZEPHYR COVE - LINCOLN PARK: Mixed commercial and residential area. Manmade structures are evident in this unit but are less garish than those found in some other units. Except for one commercial development at Lincoln Park, most of the structures blend moderately well into the natural landscape.

Rating: 19

UNIT 31 MEADOW: This unit has a typical forest environment. Open meadows give this area desirable variety. It is very important to maintain this unit in a natural state.

Rating: 18

UNIT 32 CASINO AREA: This is a big tourist attraction at Lake Tahoe. This area is not natural, but the glitter of the lights of the gambling establishments has a certain unusual attraction. The golf course at the eastern end of the casinos provides interesting contrast. The housing development next to the golf course is unattractive and detracts from the openness of the area.

Rating: 16

UNIT 33 THE STRIP: Commercial. Manmade facilities strongly detract from the natural environment. A small area of young trees is caged in by a chain link fence. Pedestrian and vehicular congestion is very high. A few glimpses of the mountains can be seen from this section of highway, but they become subordinate to all the commercial development.

Rating: 9

UNIT 34 EL DORADO BEACH: The lake is highly visible from this Unit of highway. This unit poses some hazards, such as pedestrians crossing the road from the campground to the beach. Numerous bicyclists ride along the roadside.

Rating: 16

UNIT 35 AL TAHOE: Strictly commercial. Lack of quality control in design of signs, buildings, etc., is evident. A few trees still grow between the buildings and help to break the impression of solid development. If this community continues to grow, however, these trees may disappear.

Rating: 10

UNIT 36 AIRPORT AREA: Construction facilities, gravel pits, and commercial signs reduce visual quality of the Unit. Natural areas add to the landscape, but may not remain undeveloped very long. The Lake is not visible.

Rating: 15

UNIT 37 ECHO SUMMIT: This Unit has good variety in vegetative cover, rock slopes, and high mountains. As one drives down from the summit, the airport and dust from a gravel pit detract from attractiveness of the scene.

Rating: 26

UNIT 38 UPPER TRUCKEE RIVER: Subdivisions on both sides of the highway reduce the quality of the drive. Landscape expanses are visible from this Unit.

Rating: 18

UNIT 39 APLINE SUMMIT: A wide variety of landscapes makes this unit enjoyable to drive. The Lake is not visible.

Rating: 24

UNIT 40 BROCKWAY CUTOFF: Wooded residential area. The highway goes through deep cuts, some of which have vegetative cover, and many power lines can be seen. Residences in the northern end show better design and integration with the site. Mountain views add variety.

Rating: 15

UNIT 41 BROCKWAY SUMMIT: The cut banks have some vegetal cover. Power poles located on the upper side of the road are not conspicuous. Coming down the summit a vertical scar is visible on the hillside. Some tremendous views of the Lake can be seen from the road.

Rating: 21

UNIT 42 OUTLET: A Division of Highways Maintenance Station and a large gravel pit located next to the highway detract greatly from the natural landscape.

Rating: 10

UNIT 43 LOWER TRUCKEE RIVER: The drive through this unit is very scenic except for one obtrusive commercial development along the road and a highway storage site.

Rating: 20

SHORELINE UNITS

UNIT 1 TAHOE KEYS: This residential area on the Truckee Marsh has not trees.

Rating: 11

UNIT 2 POPE BEACH: Since the westerly parking area has no screen from the Lake, cars are easily visible.

Rating: 9

UNIT 3 JAMESON BEACH: Cabins are visible and detract from views of the shoreline.

Rating: 8

UNIT 4 TAYLOR CREEK MEADOW: This is the Pope Kiva Area, with big homes. Boat piers and associated structures are good. Mt. Tallac can be seen in the background of Kiva and Taylor Creek area. Taylor Creek Meadow is an interesting landscape space. Baldwin Beach parking area is distracting where not screened.

Rating: 13

UNIT 5 EBRITE: Cabins and some boat piers are in this area. The shore rises steeply from Lake and has scattered pine cover. Road scars are evident in the foreground. General view lacks interest.

Rating: 9

UNIT 6 EMERALD BAY: View of the bay is dominated by a vertical highway scar. The shore is forested. Mt. Tallac is in the background but is not obvious. View of the cliffs around much of the shoreline is marred by scars of highway building, but the background of the southern side is natural and spectacularly beautiful.

Rating: 13

UNIT 7 BLISS STATE PARK: Eagle Rock is a striking feature. Foreground has good tree and shrub cover. Views of Mt. Tallac to the south are good. Shoreline is rocky. This is a good example of a natural landscape on the west shore.

Rating: 12

UNIT 8 RUBICON POINT: The foreground is interesting. The State beach parking, piers, etc., have little adverse impact. Large homes are well sited in trees. Rubicon Peak is in middleground.

Rating: 13

UNIT 9 RUBICON BAY: Tree cover in subdivision area is poor, and development scars are very obvious and distracting. The middleground is attractive in some areas, but the foreground is unattractive and shows careless development.

Rating: 6

UNIT 10 MEEKS BAY: The background is attractive. The foreground is resort development with a small beach. A few cabins dot the beach, and erosion is evident. Most of the manmade structures are not obnoxious. Natural openings add variety.

Rating: 9

UNIT 11 SUGAR PINE POINT: The foreground has heavy cover of trees, but there is no middleground.

Rating: 11

UNIT 12 MC KINNEY BAY: Boathouses dominate the foreground. Piers are natural weathered wood and blend well. The condominium development is conspicuous even though color of the building is harmonious with the background. Most residential development is well done. A ski area dominates the middleground; run clearings and lift lines are very obvious.

Rating: 9

UNIT 13 EAGLE ROCK: The foreground has eight weathered piers which look good. There are no boathouses. Aspen trees on shoreline are attractive. The Blackwood Creek drainage adds interest to background.

Rating: 12

UNIT 14 WARD CREEK: Heavy stands of aspen along the shore contrast attractively against a backdrop of pine. Presence of too many piers in this area gives impression of confusion. The condominiums are interesting, but some units have no screen. White drapes in numerous windows detract from quality of the area.

Rating: 10

UNIT 15 TAHOE CITY: View of this commercial area is dominated by tin buildings in the foreground. A high-rise building and a variety of contrasting colors detract from the scene.

Rating: 5

UNIT 16 LAKE FOREST: Shore is steep and rocky. The general impression given by the area is not pleasing. A mass of new housing, conspicuous road scars, power lines, and clearings for a sewer line degrade the view. Some areas have good tree cover, which lessens the unfavorable impact.

Rating: 6

UNIT 17 DOLLAR POINT: This is a near-natural area, and any development will be obvious and will detract from the present view. The north side is dominated by a tennis court built on what appears to be lake fill. A big white boathouse is also a dominant and detracting structure.

Rating: 11

UNIT 18 CEDAR FLAT: Most homes are located on the edge of the Lake out of the timber; several have ramps to piers. Some ramps reflect glare from the sun; others do not because of surface treatment. Ramps at an angle to the shoreline are much more evident than ramps parallel to shore. Background is heavily timbered.

Rating: 9

UNIT 19 CARNELIAN BAY: In this commercial area, cover is sparse to nil.

Rating: 5

UNIT 20 FLICK POINT: This residential area has good cover and screen, but many standing trees are dead. Many piers, some of which could be eliminated, are distracting. Background has some variety and hills in the background have good cover. The quality of structures is good. At one point the road comes close to the Lake and causes visual distraction.

Rating: 9

UNIT 21 AGATE BAY: Presence of the highway close to the Lake, scars on hillsides, lack of screen for structures, and garish paint on buildings all contribute to a low rating for the manmade features. The background is fairly uniform. Some aspen grows on hillsides. Other thin timber on

high hills gives variety. A conspicuous scar from some construction project detracts from the scene. Beach is sandy. Development is commercial. Few piers are evident.

Rating: 8

UNIT 22 BROCKWAY: Timber and willow cover the ground down to a rocky beach. The development is residential. Colors of buildings are good except for one aquamarine block structure only partially hidden by trees. Stateline Point is an undeveloped area which is very sensitive. Development could easily destroy natural attractiveness of this feature. A large building back from the point has good color. Additional screen would be desirable. The background for this building, as seen from the Lake, is spectacularly attractive.

Rating: 11

UNIT 23 CRYSTAL BAY: Barren mountain tops give good variety. Some roads on mountain side are poorly placed. The highway comes close to the Lake, but probably this could not be avoided. Condominiums produce a strong horizontal line that is not objectionable from a distance, and they hide the highway. Gray buildings blend into the background better than the light brown ones. Raw cut banks detract from the view. Timber cover is good. Where cover is sparse, change of color on some buildings would help blending. Tanks on the hillside could be made to blend better with the background. A big tree stands directly in front of one high-rise condominium and gives it some much needed screen. Many homes on hillside are well screened, but some are not. Utility lines cause minor detraction. Incline Ski area is hardly noticeable. A large hotel in the area has a fair tree screen. A very rocky beach with well sited buildings and natural colors is very attractive.

Rating: 12

UNIT 24 SAND HARBOR: The road is close to the beach. Traffic causes some distraction, but cuts are not high and fills are covered. The shore rises sharply to high rocky ridges that have fair timber cover.

Rating: 12

UNIT 25 SKUNK HARBOR: The area is totally natural with rocky shore, good cover, and small beaches. There is not much background.

Rating: 13

UNIT 26 CAVE ROCK: This unit has scattered residences that create low adverse impact. The road scar in foreground is moderate. The middleground has low hills and good cover. The Glenbrook area has great variety because of meadows, old piers, and sandy beach.

Rating: 12

UNIT 27 LINCOLN PARK: In this wooded residential area, most homes are well sited. However, several homes on points are examples of bad site integration. The middleground near Cave Rock has detractions caused by scar, power lines, and overside drains that glare.

Rating: 11

UNIT 28 TAHOE SCHOOL: This natural area has rocky shoreline and good middleground.

Rating: 12

UNIT 29 ZEPHYR COVE: In this wooded residential area, most residences are well integrated with natural environment. The shore is rocky and has high visual interest. However, a big pier in a small area destroys the quality of that space.

Rating: 10

UNIT 30 EDGEWOOD: Incongruous fences, trailers, and cars parked fairly close to to beach with

only limited screen in the Nevada Beach area detract from the view. Otherwise, the quality of scenery here is near natural.

Rating: 11

UNIT 31 BIJOU: This is a wooded residential area. A road runs close to the beach. Banks back of the beach are unstabilized. An abandoned pier is visually attractive. The excellent background is seriously marred by the conspicuous ski area scar.

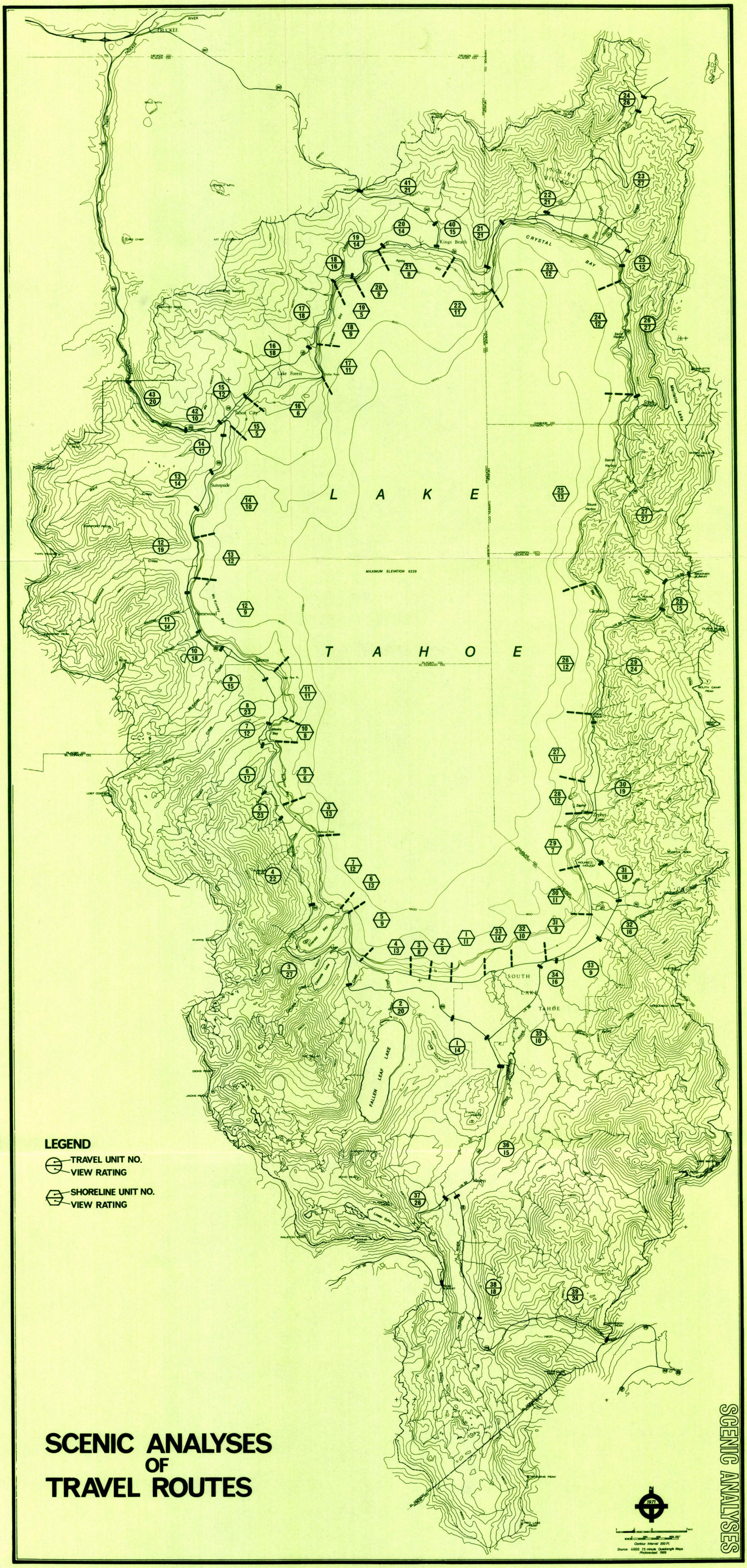
Rating: 9

UNIT 32 AL TAHOE: The city park on the Lake is attractive, but heavy bank erosion, shiny sheet piling, and condominiums directly on waterfront are distracting.

Rating: 10

UNIT 33 TRUCKEE MARSH: The only distraction is power lines across the marsh. Tremendous background.

Rating: 14



LEGEND

- TRAVEL UNIT NO.
- VIEW RATING

- SHORELINE UNIT NO.
- VIEW RATING

SCENIC ANALYSES OF TRAVEL ROUTES

SCENIC ANALYSES

LAKE TAHOE REGION

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

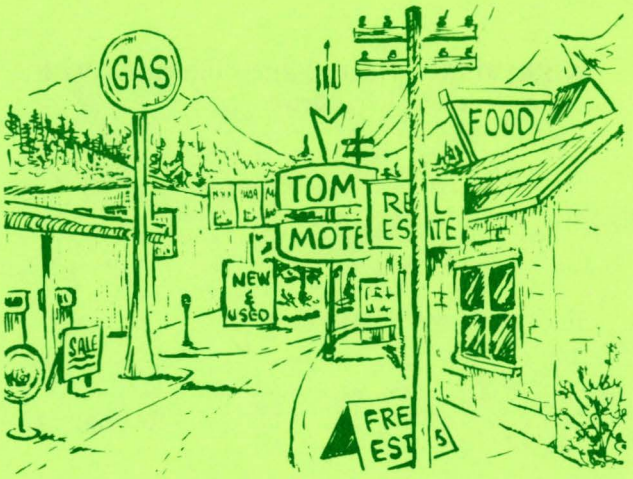
USDA FOREST SERVICE

APPENDIX A-1

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING VIEW FROM ROAD

1. **MANMADE FEATURES:** These apply to buildings, signs, piers, utility lines, and other features made by man, including prominent scars on the landscape. Whether these features are desirable or undesirable depends on such factors as location, design, color, size, and material.

a. These manmade features detract from the natural scene.



Rating: 1

b. These manmade features cause only temporary distractions.

Rating: 3

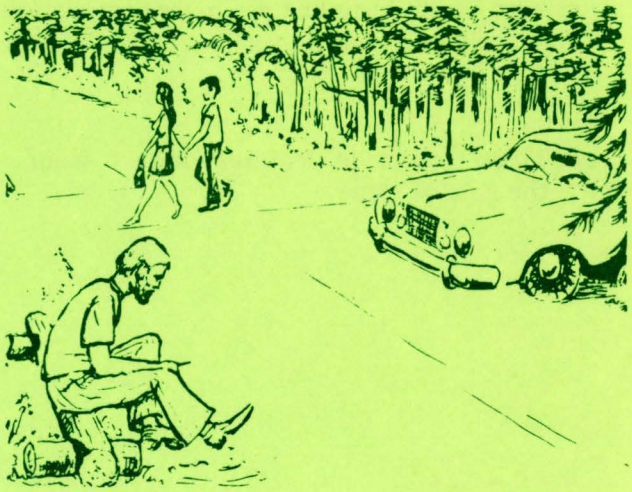
c. Manmade features do not detract from natural landscape scene.

Rating: 5

2. PHYSICAL DISTRACTIONS TO DRIVING ALONG ROADWAYS:

These items can create distractions that decrease pleasure of the drive. These distractions include stop signs; hazards created by uncontrolled access; children playing near the roadway or pedestrian interference; and poor access road takeoff or entrance points that create traffic backup.

a. Physical distractions interfere with enjoyment of the drive.



Rating: 1

b. Physical distractions cause some interference with enjoyment of the drive.

Rating: 3

c. Physical distractions do not interfere with enjoyment of the drive.

Rating: 5

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF ROADWAY

The roadway can add to or detract from the traveler's pleasure. Good alignment takes advantage of natural terrain features, avoids road scars, adds variety and vistas to the drive, and avoids ugly areas. Physical alignment is also a part of this evaluation. A road may have horizontal or vertical curves that are difficult to drive on or that detract from the view. Straight roads lack variety and can evoke a negative response from the viewer.

Criteria

a. Road detracts from the natural scene because of alignment, cuts, fills, etc.

Rating: 1

b. Road causes some detraction from the natural scene.

Rating: 3

c. Road enhances the visual experience.

Rating: 5

4. VIEWS OF LAKE

One main reason why people visit this region is to see the Lake. Some roadways offer outstanding views of the Lake, but some sections offer no such views. Many view areas are on access roads into the region. They should be evaluated, in addition to the present perimeter highways, so that this factor can be used as a consideration in future road upgrading and location. This factor can also be used to determine areas along the roadway where timber may be cut to improve vistas.

Criteria

a. Travel zone is frustrating because it does not offer views of the Lake.

Rating: 1

b. Travel zone offers glimpse of the Lake.

Rating: 3

c. Travel zone offers many good views of the Lake.

Rating: 5

5. LANDSCAPE VIEWS

Extensive scenic views reward the visitor, but closed spaces prevent him from seeing the landscape. Looking over a cliff into space or looking up at massive mountains can be very rewarding even to the person who is already acquainted with the scene.

Criteria

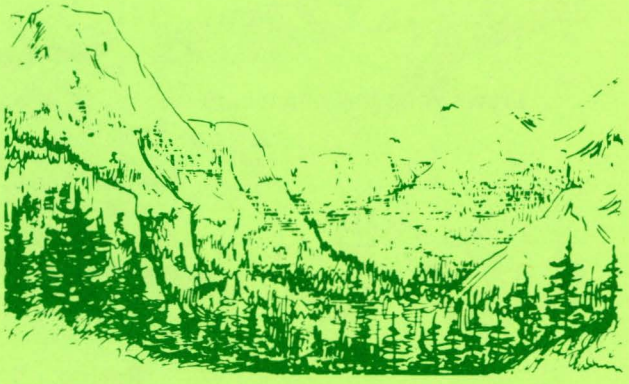
a. Travel zone gives no opportunity to view natural landscape expanses.

Rating: 1

b. Travel zone gives only limited opportunity to view natural landscape expanses.

Rating: 3

c. Travel zone gives many opportunities to view natural landscape expanses.



Rating: 5

6. VARIETY

Variety along a travel route is created by changes in the total landscape. These changes can be created by topography, vegetation, water or manmade facilities. When these changes harmonize with the natural environment, they are very desirable. Lack of variety over an extended drive can bore a traveler.

Criteria

a. Travel zone is monotonous.

Rating: 1

b. Travel zone has some variety.

Rating: 3

c. Travel zone has much variety.

Rating: 5

APPENDIX A-2

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING VIEWS FROM LAKE

1. MANMADE FEATURES

Manmade features as seen from the Lake are evaluated in terms of the aesthetic qualities of structures and other manmade features that create eyesores, such as landscape scars or utility lines.

a. Manmade features detract from landscape.

Rating: 1

b. Manmade features cause limited detraction from landscape.

Rating: 3

c. Manmade features are not obvious in the landscape or they enhance the scene.

Rating: 5

2. LANDSCAPE VIEWS

The view seen by the boat user near the shoreline is a panorama of the Basin. This view may offer a fairly unvaried landscape or may include an outstanding background for the scene.

Criteria

a. View is a fairly unvaried landscape.

Rating: 3

b. Views include outstanding background for the landscape.

Rating: 5

3. VARIETY

Variety is change in the landscape. Within the vista the viewer forms an impression by the positive and negative changes on the landscape. Manmade facilities can be either enhancement or an unpleasant distraction. An outstanding vista may be scarred by a power line or soil scar that negatively modifies the scene.

Criteria

a. Composition of landscape is uniform and lacks variety.

Rating: 1

b. Landscape offers some variation in topography, vegetation types, etc.

Rating: 3

c. Landscape has dominant natural features such as high peaks, large meadows, waterfall, etc.

Rating: 5

APPENDIX B-1

The form below approximates that of the worksheet used by members of the special Forest Service Task Group in rating views from the roadway. The rating criteria listed here are explained and illustrated above (pp. 25-30). Ratings of the several units are compiled in a table following the list of criteria.

RATING SHEET–ROADS

RATE ROAD UNITS ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

Date: Sept. 1970
Rated: CO/JK/KS

Number		Criteria	Rating
1.	a.	Manmade features detract from the natural landscape scene.	1
	b.	Manmade features cause only temporary distractions.	3
	c.	Manmade features do not detract from the natural landscape.	5
2.	a.	Physical distractions interfere with enjoyment of the drive.	1
	b.	Physical distractions cause some interference with enjoyment of the drive.	3
	c.	Physical distractions do not interfere with enjoyment of the drive.	5
3.	a.	Road detracts from the natural scene because of alignment, cuts, fills, etc.	1
	b.	Road causes some detraction from the natural scene.	3
	c.	Road enhances the visual experience.	5
4.	a.	Travel zone is frustrating because it does not offer views of the Lake.	1
	b.	Travel zone offers glimpses of the Lake.	3
	c.	Travel zone offers a variety of views of the Lake.	5
5.	a.	Travel zone gives no opportunity to view natural landscape expanses.	1
	b.	Travel zone gives only limited opportunity to view natural landscape expanses.	3
	c.	Travel zone gives many opportunities to view natural landscape expanses.	5
6.	a.	Travel zone is monotonous.	1
	b.	Travel zone has some variety.	3
	c.	Travel zone has much variety.	5

RATING SUMMARY–ROADS

Unit No.	Unit Name	Criteria 1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1	Tahoe Valley	2	3	3	2	3	1	14
2	Camp Richardson	4	4	4	2	3	3	20
3	Emerald Bay	5	3	4	5	5	5	27
4	Bliss State Park	5	5	4	3	2	3	22
5	Rubicon Bay	4	4	4	4	4	3	23
6	Lonely Gulch	3	4	4	4	4	2	21
7	Meeks Bay	2	2	3	2	1	2	12
8	Sugar Pine Point	4	5	4	3	4	3	23
9	Tahoma	2	3	3	2	3	2	15
10	Quail Creek	4	3	3	3	2	3	18
11	Homewood	2	2	3	3	2	2	14
12	Tahoe Pines	3	2	4	4	3	3	19
13	Sunnyside	2	2	4	1	2	3	14
14	Tahoe Tavern	3	3	4	2	2	3	17
15	Tahoe City	1	1	2	3	3	2	12
16	Lake Forest	3	3	4	3	3	2	18
17	Cedar Flat	3	2	3	4	3	3	18
18	Carnelian Bay	1	3	3	4	3	2	16
19	Flick Point	2	2	4	1	3	2	14
20	Tahoe Vista	1	1	3	3	4	2	14
21	Stateline Point	3	2	4	5	4	3	21
22	Crystal Bay	4	3	3	3	4	4	21
23	Mt. Rose Highway	3	5	4	5	5	5	27
24	Tahoe Meadow	4	5	3	5	5	4	26
25	Ponderosa Area	1	2	3	3	2	1	12
26	Sand Harbor	5	3	4	5	5	5	27
27	Prey Meadow	4	5	4	5	5	4	27
28	Spooner Summit	3	3	3	4	1	2	16
29	Cave Rock	4	4	3	5	5	3	24
30	Zephyr Cove-Lincoln Park	3	3	3	4	3	3	19
31	Meadow	3	4	3	3	1	4	18
32	Casino Area	4	1	2	2	2	4	15
33	The Strip	1	1	2	2	2	1	9
34	El Dorado Beach	4	1	2	4	3	2	16
35	Al Tahoe	1	2	2	2	1	2	10
36	Airport Area	2	3	3	3	1	3	15
37	Echo Summit	4	5	5	4	3	5	26
38	Upper Truckee River	3	4	4	3	1	3	18
39	Alpine Summit	4	5	4	5	1	5	24
40	Brockway Cutoff	2	3	3	3	2	2	15
41	Brockway Summit	3	5	3	3	4	3	21
42	Outlet	1	2	3	1	1	2	10
43	Lower Truckee River	3	3	4	1	4	5	20

APPENDIX B-2

The form below approximates that of the worksheet used by members of the special Forest Service Task Group in rating views of the shoreline as seen from the Lake. The rating criteria listed here are explained and illustrated above (pp. 31-33). Ratings of the several units are compiled in a table following the list of criteria.

RATING SHEET--SHORELINE

RATE SHORELINE UNITS ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA Date: Sept. 1970
Rated: CO/JK/KS

Number		Criteria	Rating
1.	a.	Manmade features detract from landscape.	1
	b.	Manmade features cause limited detraction from landscape.	3
	c.	Manmade features are not obvious in the landscape or they enhance the scene.	5
2.	a.	View is a fairly unvaried landscape.	3
	b.	View includes outstanding background for the landscape.	5
3.	a.	Composition of landscape is uniform and lacks variety.	1
	b.	Landscape offers some variation in topography, vegetation types, etc.	3
	c.	Landscape has dominant natural features such as high peaks, large meadows, waterfall, etc.	5

RATING SUMMARY--SHORELINE

Unit No.	Unit Name	Criteria 1	2	3	Total
1	Tahoe Keys	2	5	4	11
2	Pope Beach	3	3	3	9
3	Jameson Beach	3	2	3	8
4	Taylor Creek Meadow	3	5	5	13
5	Ebrite	2	4	3	9
6	Emerald Bay	3	5	5	13
7	Bliss State Park	5	4	3	12
8	Rubicon Point	4	5	4	13
9	Rubicon Bay	1	3	2	6
10	Meeks Bay	2	4	3	9
11	Sugar Pine Point	4	4	3	11
12	McKinney Bay	3	3	3	9
13	Eagle Rock	3	5	4	12
14	Ward Creek	3	3	4	10
15	Tahoe City	1	2	2	5
16	Lake Forest	2	2	2	6
17	Dollar Point	4	4	3	11
18	Cedar Flat	3	3	3	9
19	Carnelian Bay	1	3	1	5
20	Flick Point	3	3	3	9
21	Agate Bay	1	4	3	8
22	Brockway	3	4	4	11
23	Crystal Bay	3	5	4	12
24	Sand Harbor	4	5	3	12
25	Skunk Harbor	5	4	4	13
26	Cave Rock	4	4	4	12
27	Lincoln Park	3	4	3	10
28	Tahoe School	5	4	3	12
29	Zephyr Cove	3	3	4	10
30	Edgewood	4	4	3	11
31	Bijou	1	4	4	9
32	Al Tahoe	3	4	3	10
33	Truckee Marsh	4	5	5	14

This publication is one of a group issued jointly by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the USDA Forest Service. Each publication describes and inventories a natural resource or other characteristic that is significant to the total environment of the Lake Tahoe Region; it attempts to show the hazards incidental to improperly planned development of the area and to provide information helpful in designing controls that must be implemented if the scenic beauty of the Lake Tahoe Region is to be preserved and its other natural resources are to be conserved. These publications are not exhaustive treatises of their subjects, but they highlight the known significant information and data useful in the planning effort underway. Subjects of publications in this series are:

Climate and Air Quality of the Lake Tahoe Region

Cultural and Historical Significance of the Lake Tahoe Region

Land Resources of the Lake Tahoe Region

Fisheries of the Lake Tahoe and Its Tributary Waters

Geology and Geomorphology of the Lake Tahoe Region

Hydrology and Water Resources of the Lake Tahoe Region

Limnology and Water Quality of Lake Tahoe and Tributary Waters

Recreational Resources of the Lake Tahoe Region

Wildlife of the Lake Tahoe Region

Soils of the Lake Tahoe Region

Vegetation of the Lake Tahoe Region

Scenic Analyses of the Lake Tahoe Region

Because of the heavy expense of publication and because these reports are designed chiefly for use by planners, supplies are not available for general public distribution.